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THE SPEECH

OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF SHELBURNE,

IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

ON

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1783,

ON THE

ARTICLES OF PEACE.

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SPEECH, &c.

THE lateneſs of the hour, my Lords, ſaid he, will not ſuffer me to take the liberty of treſpaſſing ſo far on your patience, as my feelings would therein prompt me to on the preſent occaſion. I ſhall not addreſs your paſſions—that candid province I will leave to thoſe who have ſhewn ſuch ability for its government to night. As my conduct has been founded upon integrity—facts, and plain reaſoning, will form its beſt ſupport.——I ſhall neceſſarily wave the conſideration of the critical moment at which I ſtepped into the adminiſtration of the affairs of this country—a moment when, if there be any credit due to the ſolemn public declarations of men who ſeemed then, and ſeem now, to have the welfare of the State neareſt to their hearts —every hope of rennovated luſtre was gone, and nothing but dreary deſpondency remainded to the well-wiſhers of Great-Britain. I am now ſpeaking within memory, and conſequently within proof. It is not for me to boaſt of my motives for ſtanding forward at a period ſo alarming. My circumſtances are not ſo obſcure as to render my conduct a matter of dubiety, and my own explanations of my feelings would, I flatter myſelf, fall far ſhort of that credit which ſympathy would give me in the minds of men, whoſe patriotiſm is not that of words; I make no merit of my hardihood, and when I ſpeak of mine, I wiſh your Lordſhips to underſtand me as ſpeaking of the generous enterprize of my noble and honourable colleagues in adminiſtration. It was our duty as good citizens, when the ſtate was in danger, that all ſelfiſh apprehenſions ſhould be baniſhed. I ſhall not, therefore, expatiate on my reaſons for coming into office, but openly and candidly tell your Lordſhips how I have conducted myſelf in it. A peace was the declared wiſh of the nation at that time. How was that to be procured beſt for the advantage of my country? Certainly by gaining the moſt accurate knowledge of the relative condition of the powers at war. Here a field of knowledge was required to be beaten, which no one man, vaſt and profound as it is poſſible to picture human capacity, would by any means be ſuppoſed equal to. Then if one man was inadequate to the whole taſk, the next queſtion naturally is, what ſet of men are beſt qualified as auxiliaries in it? What is the ſkill required? A knowledge of trade and commerce, with all its relations, and an intimate acquaintance with military affairs, and all its concomitants.—Were men of this deſcription conſulted previous to, and during the progreſs of the treaty now before your Lordſhips? I anſwer, they were. And with this ſanction Adminiſtration need aſſume no falſe brow of bravery, in combating glittering aſſertions without edge, and inflated ſpeculations without ſtamina. Let us examine them, my Lords—Miniſtry, in the firſt place, is blamed for drawing the boundary they have done between the territories of the United States and thoſe of our Sovereign in Canada. I wiſh to examine every part of the treaties on the fair rule of value of the diſtrict ceded—To examine it on the amount of the exports and imports, by which alone we could judge of its importance. The exports of this country to Canada then were only 140,cool. and the imports were no more than 50,oool. Suppoſe the entire fur trade ſunk into the ſea, were is the detriment to this country? Is 50,ocol. a year imported in that article any object for Great-Britain to continue a war which the people of England, by their repreſentatives, have declared their abhorrance of? Surely it is not. But much leſs muſt this appear in our ſight, when I tell Parliament, and the whole kingdom, that for many years paſt, one year with another, the preſervation of this annual import of 50,cool. has coſt this country, on an average, 800,cool. I have the vouchers in my pocket, ſhould your Lordſhips be inclined to examine the fact. But

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the trade is not given up, it is only divided, and divided for our benefit. I appeal to all men converſant with the nature of that trade, whether its beſt reſources in Canada do not lie to the northward, What then is the reſult of this part of the treaty, ſo wiſely, and with ſo much ſincere love on the part of England clamoured againſt by noble Lords? Why this. You have generouſly given America, with whom every call under Heaven urges you to ſtand on the footing of brethren, a ſhare in a trade, the monopoly of which you ſordidly preſerved to yourſelves, at the loſs of the enormous ſum of ſeven hundred and fifty thouſand pounds. Monopolies ſome way or other, are ever juſtly puniſhed. They forbid rivalry, and rivalry is of the very eſſence of the well-being of trade. This ſeems to be the æra of Proteſtantiſm in trade. All Europe appear enlightened, and eager to throw off the vile ſhackles of oppreſſive ignorant monopoly, of that unmanly and illiberal principle, which is at once ungenerous and deceitful. A few intereſted Canadian merchants might complain; for merchants would always love monopoly, without taking a moment's time to think, whether it was for their intereſt or not. I avow that monopoly is always unwiſe; but if there is any nation under Heaven, who ought to be the firſt that reject monopoly, it is the Engliſh. Situated as we are between the old world and the new—and between the ſouthern and northern Europe—all that we ought to covet upon earth was free trade, and fair equality. With more induſtry, with more enterprize, with more capital than any trading nation upon earth, it ought to be our conſtant cry—let every market be open—let us meet our rivals fairly—and we aſk no more. It is a principle on which we have had the wiſdom to act with reſpect to our brethren of Ireland, and, if conciliation be our view, why ſhould we not reach it out alſo to America. Our generoſity is not much, but little as it is, let us give it with a grace. Indeed, to ſpeak properly, it is not generoſity to them, but œconomy to ourſelves; and in the boundaries which are eſtabliſhed we have ſaved ourſelves the immenſe ſum of 800,000l. a year. and ſhewed to the Americans our ſincere love and fair intentions, in dividing the little bit of trade which Nature had laid at their doors; and telling them that we deſired to live with them in communion of benefits, and in the ſincerity of friendſhip. But the Indians were abandoned to their enemies. Noble Lords have taken great pains to ſhew the immenſe value of theſe Indians, it was not unnatural for noble Lords, who had made ſo laviſh an uſe of theſe Indians, to complain of their loſs; but theſe who abhorred their violence would think Miniſtry had done wiſely—The Americans knew beſt how to tame their ſavage natures.—The deſcendants of the good William Penn would manage them better than all the Mr. Stuarts with all the Jews harps, razors, trumpery, and jobs that we could contrive. And now that I am ſpeaking on the proviſional articles with America, I ſhall diſmiſs this ſubject, though it is blended with others, before I proceed to the inveſtigation of the reſt of the objections to the treaties of pacification. Why have you given America the freedom of fiſhing in all your creeks and harbours, and eſpecially on the banks of Newfoundland, ſay the noble objectors to this article? Why? becauſe, in the firſt place, they could, from their locality, have exerciſed a fiſhery in that quarter for the firſt ſeaſon (for there are two) without our conſent, and in ſpite of all our efforts to repel them. In February, the firſt ſeaſon commences, and that is entirely at their devotion; for our people have never, and can never take their ſtations there ſo ſoon. With regard to the other ſeaſon, let us again revert to what I have already ſaid reſpecting the fur trade; though we have not a monopoly, we have got ſuch ſuperior advantages in the article of drying, curing, and preparing our fiſh for market, from the excluſive command of the moſt contigious ſhores, that a rivalry can only whet our induſtry to reap thoſe benefits our preferable ſituation in this reſpect preſents to us. But why have we not ſtipulated a reciprocity of fiſhing in the American harbours and creeks? I'll tell your Lordſhips: Becauſe we have abundant employment in our own. Would not an American think it ſordid in the extreme, nay, conſider it bordering on madneſs, to covet the privilege of battening our cattle on ſome of their ſteril wilds, when we had our own fertile Savannahs to have recourſe to. Such would be the opinion entertained of Miniſtry, if it had childiſhly and avariciouſly made a ſtipulation of the nature the objectors think they ought to have. As to the maſts, a noble Lord ſaid, we were to have in ſuch abundance at Penobſcot. I will oppoſe a fact to his bare aſſertion. I have in my pocket a certificate from one of the ableſt ſurveyors, in our ſervice, Captain Twiſs, that there is not a tree there capable of being made a maſt. But there remains ſomewhat in theſe proviſional articles ſtill to be conſidered, which I have never reflected on without feelings as pungent as any which the warmeſt admirers of the virtues

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of the Loyaliſts can poſſibly have experienced. I mean, the unhappy neceſſity of our affairs, which induced the extremity of ſubmitting the fate of the property of theſe brave and worthy men to the diſcretion of their enemies.—I have but one anſwer to give the Houſe in this particular, it is the anſwer I gave my own bleeding heart. A part muſt be wounded, that the whole of the empire may not periſh. If better terms could be had, think you, my Lords, that I would not have embraced them. You all know my creed. You all know my ſteadineſs. If it were poſſible to put aſide the bitter cup the adverſities of this country preſented to me, you know I would have done it; but you called for peace. To make it in the circumſtances, which your Lordſhips all know I ſtood on, was moſt arduous. in this point nothing could be more grievous to me. Neither in public nor in private life is it my character to deſert my friends—I had but the alternative—either accept the terms, ſaid Congreſs, of our recommendation to the ſtates, in favour of the Coloniſts, or continue the war. It is in our power to do no more than recommend. Is there any man who hears me who will clap his hand on his heart and ſtep forward and ſay, I ought to have broken off the treaty? If there be, I am ſure he neither knows the ſtate of the country, nor yet has he paid any attention to the wiſhes of it. But ſtill I do not deſpond with reſpect to the loyaliſts—I rely upon the wiſdom, the honour, and the temper of the Congreſs. They were cautious in wording their treaty, leſt they ſhould poſſibly give offence to the new ſtates, whoſe conſtitutions had not advanced to thoſe habits of appearance and ſtrength that baniſhes all ſuſpicions; peremptory language is not the language of a new ſtate. They muſt ſoften their applications. In all their meaſures—for money—for men—they have uſed the word *recommendation* to the Provincial Aſſemblies—and it has always been paid reſpect to. And, believe me, they do the Loyaliſts the offices not of friends, who ſurmiſe doubts on this occaſion. But ſay the worſt; and that after all, this eſtimable ſet of men are not received and cheriſhed in the boſom of their own country. Is England ſo loſt to gratitude, and all the feelings of humanity, as not to afford them an aſylum.————Who can be ſo baſe as to think ſhe will refuſe it to them?————Surely it cannot be that noble-minded man, who would plunge his country again knee-deep in blood, and ſaddle it with an expence of twenty millions for the purpoſe of reſtoring them. Without one drop of blood ſpilt, and without one fifth expence of one year's campaign, happineſs and eaſe can be given the Loyaliſts in as ample a manner as theſe bleſſings were ever in their enjoyment; therefore let the outcry ceaſe on this head. But which of the two ſtiles of language is the more likely to aſſiſt the Loyaliſts; The ſtile of the addreſs which declares the confidence of Parliament in the great intentions of the Congreſs—or the ſtile of the noble Lords who declare that recommendation is nothing. It ſurely requires, my Lords, no great depth of penetration to diſtinguiſh between theſe things. A noble Viſcount aſks why Mr. Oſwald was appointed as negociator againſt ſuch odds. It is very true Mr. Oſwald has not the oratorial abilities of the noble Viſcount, the Ciceronian ſtile, nor the perſuaſive addreſs. The noble Viſcount would have ſpoken in a different language; but Mr. Oſwald had other talents, and, in my opinion, talents of a ſuperior quality—the talents of full information on the ſubject—great commercial knowledge—plain dealing—unſpotted integrity—and a character which gave confidence to whatever he ſaid.

With reſpect to the ceſſion of the two Floridas, he muſt refer again to the exports and imports. Imports were not more than 70,000l. and the exports hardly exceeded 120,000l. To be ſure I would not willingly take ſo much from the commerce of the nation; but amidſt the millions of our trade, is this an object worth contending for at the hazard of continuing war? We will now, my Lords, conſider the articles with France, and firſt let us look to Europe. I am aſked, why overlook all the treatiſe reſpecting Dunkirk? Why, let me aſk the queſtion in return, why were not theſe treaties ever inforced during all the adminiſtrations which have paſſed away ſince the demolition of that harbour was firſt ſtipulated; This negligence is *prima facie* evidence of the little account in which the fulfilling of that treaty has hitherto been held; for were it otherwiſe, we had often ſince the power to enforce it. And I have heard that able ſeaman, the late Lord Hawke, declare, that all the art and coſt that France could beſtow on the baſon of Dunkirk, would not render it in any degree formidable or noxious to Great Britain. But, as was well obſerved by a noble friend near me (Lord Grantham) France wiſhed to have the feathers ſhe formerly ſtrutted with, reſtored to her; and, ſurely, no ſober man would continue the war to thwart a fancy ſo little detrimental to us. However, if I am miſtaken; if Lord Howe be miſtaken; if former Miniſters be miſtaken, let the proof be produced. Till then, I truſt

truſt your Lordſhips, if you do not now approve of the conduct of my adminiſtration, in this particular, you will at leaſt ſuſpend your judgments. We will now, if your Lordſhips pleaſe, advert to the objections reſpecting the ceſſion to France on the coaſt of Newfoundland. This, to be ſure, is not to be tried by the rule of imports and exports. But what is it? Seven degrees of latitude. Theſe are ſounding words; but they are no more. By this part of the treaty future quarrels are guarded againſt. The concurrent fiſhery formerly exerciſed was a ſource of endleſs ſtrife—the French are now confined to a certain ſpot—it is nothing compared to the extent we poſſeſs, and it is beſides ſituate in the leaſt productive part of that coaſt. But I would not have your Lordſhips pay greater attention to my bare aſſertion, than I truſt you will to the aſſertions of thoſe who take upon themſelves to pronounce this part of the treaty wrong. I have here ready for your inſpection the opinions of the ableſt men on that ſubject. I applied to the perſon beſt qualified to point them out to me. The noble Lord near to me, (Lord Keppel) then at the head of the Admiralty, referred me to three officers in his Majeſty's ſervice, whoſe judgment and integrity he could rely on, and your Lordſhips, on the bare naming of them, will rely on them too. Admiral Edwards teſtimony muſt have its weight—the teſtimony of Captain Leviſon Gower, whoſe ſervices the nation are to enjoy in peace as well as war—and that of Lieutenant Lane, who took an accurate ſurvey of the whole coaſt, and who was well qualified for the taſk, as he ſerved under and poſſeſſed the confidence of the famous circum-navigator, Captain Cooke. Theſe officers all declare, that the beſt fiſhing was to the ſouthward, which was entirely in the poſſeſſion of the Engliſh; ſo that we muſt doubt the national ſpirit and the national induſtry of this country, before we can pronounce, ſaid his Lordſhip, this ſo much talked of excluſive ſeven league fiſhery an injury to Great Britain. As to the ceſſion of St. Pierre and Miquelon, where is the proof that theſe places can be fortified ſo as to annoy us; I call on the noble objectors for their proofs—I call in vain, I know I do. I have here in my hand that which will ſatisfy your Lordſhips how idle all ſurmiſes are on that head. Here are certificates from the moſt ſkilful and experienced engineers, that neither St. Pierre or Miquelon would admit the conſtruction of a fortreſs, which could ſtand the attack of the ſmalleſt of your frigates.—Permit me, my Lords, to impreſs upon your minds, that the foundation of all the parts of the reſpective treaties before you was, as I ſtated in the beginning, not ſpeculation or idle conjecture, but practice and ſolid experience. My language does not mock your underſtanding with aſſertions—it feeds it with fact.—With this conſtantly in your eye, I court for myſelf and my colleagues, your Lordſhips deciſion on our conduct. And we will now, if your Lordſhips pleaſe, take a view of our affairs in the Weſt Indies. All the Iſlands there are reſtored to us, and in return, we cede St. Lucia and Tobago. St. Lucia, held in ſo much eſtimation now, may be tried more fairly by the value ſet upon it at the laſt peace. As I ſaid before, on all hands it is allowed that was not a humiliating, but a high and mighty peace for this country. Why, therefore, if this Iſland was, as the objectors pretend, the key-ſtone that ſupported and connected the arch of all our power in the Leeward Iſlands—Why, I ſay, was not this Iſland then retained? But I can produce the opinions of your moſt experienced ſeamen on this head, my Lords, which vindicate that Miniſtry as well as the preſent. And I do therefore claim the indulgence (until my poſition is controverted by ſuperior evidence) to be believed when I aſſert, that St. Lucia is not of that vaſt conſequence ſome noble Lords would poſſeſs this Houſe with the opinion of, in order to depreciate the merits of the treaty. With reſpect to Tobago, it is ſaid, the ceſſion of that iſland will ruin our cotton manufacture. Pray let me aſk, noble Lords, was our cotton manufacture a poor one before we poſſeſſed that iſland? As no noble Lord riſes to aſſert the affirmative, I will be allowed to ſtate it in the negative. It was not poor then. Why ſhould it be poor now? We have been long in poſſeſſion of that great branch of trade, conſequently can afford to give a greater price for cotton than any of our neighbours. Cotton, therefore, be it in the hands of friend or foe, will always, your Lodſhips may be aſſured, find its way to our door, in preference to that of thoſe who cannot meet it with ſuch a purſe. But I know a few over-grown monopolizers of that article, or ſome ſelfiſh proprietors, would ſee the nation ſteeped in blood, ſooner than they would forfeit, by the peace, one farthing of that emolument which they uſed to make when Tobago was in our hands. Let me comfort theſe worthy men, by telling them, that the iſlands reſtored to us, contain a vaſt number of acres, uncultivated, which may be applied to the growth of this ſo much coveted commodity. But let it be remembered, that we have kept Dominique—an iſland as valuable to this country, if not more ſo,

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than St. Lucia, if conſidered as a place of obſervation and ſtrength. I have it on the authority of a noble Admiral, whoſe conqueſts in the Weſt-Indies have been diſtinguiſhed by laurels that will bloom for ever. We will now, my Lords, proceed to the examination of the objections againſt the part of the French treaty that reſpects our affairs on the coaſt of Africa. Senegal is given up, and the gum trade is therefore loſt. Is that inference juſt? Is not the faith of France engaged for our having a fair ſhare of that trade. More than a ſhare we never were in poſſeſſion of. But what tie is this ſame *faith*; It will be aſked, What tie, Why as ſtrong a tie, as all men of reflection muſt know every parchment tie is between rival nations.—Only to be obſerved while intereſt or convenience obliges. The ties of nations no man can be ſo wretchedly verſed in hiſtory, or ſo miſerably deficient in obſervation, as to place upon the parallel with thoſe which are binding upon individuals; but on enquiry, your Lordſhips will find, that Senegal, which we have given up, is not ſo favourably ſituated for trade as Senegambia, which we have kept. The former has a bar dangerous to ſhipping; an inconvenience which the other is free from. In a word, by this article of the treaty, inſtead of loſing any thing, we ſecure (as much as we ever had ſecured) a ſhare in the gum trade, and we are not under the neceſſity we formerly were, of making that coaſt a grave for our fellow ſubjects, thouſands of whom were annually devoted to deſtruction from the unhealthineſs of that climate, by means of our jealouſy, which ſent them there to watch an article of trade, which in vain we endeavoured to monopolize. I muſt now, my Lords, call your attention to what concerns the part of the treaty reſpecting the Eaſt-Indies. Here Miniſtry are aſked, why they reſtored Pondicherry to the French? and why they gave permiſſion to them to run a ditch round Chandenagore. Two cogent reaſons can be given for this conduct? The firſt is the unwillingneſs, and the inability of this country, to proſecute the war; and the other is, the diſtracted ſtate of the Britiſh dominions in that part of the world. Your Lordſhips muſt ſoon be fully acquainted with the whole of the melancholy truth I only glance at on this occaſion. My Lords, by the laſt accounts from thence, the troops were declared to be four months unpaid, and of courſe upon the eve of a mutiny. Nay, in ſuch miſerable ſituation were the affairs of the Eaſt-India Company in that quarter, that they were obliged to mortgage their commodities to wealthy individuals, who would not (ſo reduced is the credit of the Company in that quarter of the globe) take their ſolemn aſſurance for the faithful diſpoſal of the ſtock at the Eaſt-India ſales here, but employed agents to ſee the buſineſs more ſecurely tranſacted. Do your Lordſhips know that there are one million four hundred thouſand pounds of theſe draughts yet unpaid? that there are two hundred and forty thouſand pounds more coming home? And that your Lordſhips may form ſome eſtimate of the extravagance of the uſury at which the Company were obliged to borrow from theſe people, when ſome of the very agents employed by thoſe uſurers, have twenty thouſand pounds a year commiſſion for their trouble. Is it neceſſary, my Lords, to ſay a word more for the neceſſity of conceding theſe matters to the French, who were at the very moment forming alliances with Hyder Ally, our moſt formidable and inveterate enemy, to drive us entirely out of the country. Our old foe, Monſieur de Buſſy, in the decline of life, almoſt at the age of eighty, leaving France purpoſely to form alliances.—And what have we to withſtand their force when formed? Will unpaid troops fight, think you? But ſay that it was poſſible to expect ſuch diſintereſted conduct from a common ſoldiery, will, or rather can famiſhed troops fight. Our account about the ſame time tells us, that our forces ſent out againſt Hyder Ally, were in daily dread of being ſtarved to death. What ſtand could any army of infantry (for we had no horſe) make againſt that potent prince, and his numerous, well-appointed, formidable cavalry? None, They would be as chaff before the wind. Do your Lordſhips know too, that all hopes of peace with the Mahrattas are fruſtrated—that we have been deceived by idle ſtories of applications being made to men of power in the Mahratta States, who promiſed to exert their influence, but it was found, that they had no influence upon earth? While, therefore, the French Court were ignorant of the ſad condition of our affairs in that quarter, while they were as yet unacquainted with the reſult of Monſieur de Buſſy's negociating with the Indian Powers, was it not prudent in the Britiſh Miniſtry to concede, as they did at that moment, when there was a probability that they had conceded what was no longer in their power to keep? I have now, ſaid his Lordſhip, gone, as well as my memory ſerves me, through the detail of all the objections which have been made to the treaty between us and France; and, I truſt, your Lordſhips ſee, from the facts to which I have all along referred you, the neceſſity and the policy of our conduct in

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this particular. Let me, before I conclude, call to your Lordſhips minds the general ſtate of this country, at the period in which the pacific negociations were ſet on foot. Were we not at the extremity of diſtreſs? Did not the boldeſt of us cry out for peace? Was not the object of the war done? Was not the independence of America ſolemnly recognized by Parliament? Could that independence be afterwards made a ſtipulation for the reſtoration of tranquility? On an entire (not a partial) view of our affairs at that time, is there any honeſt ſenſible man in this kingdom, that will not ſay the powerful confederacy with whom we had then to contend, had the moſt decided ſuperiority over us? Had we ſcarce one taxable article that was not already taxed to the utmoſt extent?—Were we not one hundred and ninety ſeven millions in debt? and had we not the enormous ſum of twenty-five millions unfunded? Our navy bills bearing an enormous diſcount—our public credit beginning to totter—our reſources confeſſedly at an end—our commerce day by day becoming worſe—our army reduced, and in want of thirty thouſand men to make up its eſtabliſhments—our navy which has been made ſo much the boaſt of ſome men, in ſuch a condition, that the noble Viſcount, now at the head of the profeſſion, in giving a deſcription of it, ſtrove to conceal its weakneſs, by ſpeaking low, as if he wiſhed to keep it from going abroad into the world. But in ſuch a day as this it muſt be told—their Lordſhips muſt be told what were the difficulties which the King's Miniſters had to encounter with in the courſe of the laſt campaign. Your Lordſhips muſt be told how many ſleepleſs nights I have ſpent—how many weary hours of watching and diſtreſs. What have been my anxieties for New-York! What have I ſuffered from the apprehenſion of an attack on that garriſon, which, if attacked, muſt have fallen! What have I ſuffered from the apprehenſion of an attack on Nova Scotia or Newfoundland! The folly, or the want of enterprize, of our enemies alone protected thoſe places; for, had they gone there inſtead of Hudſon's Bay, they muſt have fallen. What have I ſuffered for the Weſt-Indies, where, with all our ſuperiority of navy, we were not able to undertake one active or offenſive meaſure for want of troops; and where, if an attack had been made where it was meditated, we were liable to loſe our moſt valuable poſſeſſions! How many ſleepleſs nights have I not ſuffered for our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt Indies, where our diſtreſſes were undeſcribable! How many ſleepleſs nights did I not ſuffer on account of our campaign in Europe, where, with all our boaſted navy, we had only one fleet with which to accompliſh various objects! That navy, he was fair to own, was well conducted. Its detachment to the North Seas, to intimidate the Dutch, was a happy and a ſeaſonable ſtroke; but the ſalvation of the Baltic fleet was not all to be aſcribed to ability—accident contributed to that event—accident contributed to more than one article of our naval triumphs. How many of our ſhips were unclean? The noble Viſcount has told us the caſe of the fleet with which he was ſent to the relief of Gibraltar. He could hardly venture to ſwim home in the Victory. How many of our ſhips were in fact undermanned? Did the Houſe know this? Did they know that our naval ſtores were exhauſted—that our cordage was rotten—that our magazines were in a very low condition—and that we had no proſpect of our navy being much better in the next campaign than it was in the preſent. [The noble Earl, during all theſe queries, directed his eyes to Lord *Keppel*, until the noble Admiral called him to order.] Do the Houſe know all this? The noble Lord is offended at my directing myſelf to him; I have no idea of imputing blame to the noble Viſcount. His abilities are unqueſtioned; but when the greatneſs of the navy is made not only a boaſt, but an argument, it is fair to examine the fact. Are not theſe things ſo? and are not theſe things to be conſidered, weighed, and taken into the account, before Miniſters are condemned for given peace to the country? Let the man who will anſwer me theſe queſtions fairly, tell me how, in ſuch circumſtances, he would make a peace, before he lets his tongue looſe againſt thoſe treaties, the ratification of which has cauſed (for myſelf at leaſt I will ſpeak, and I believe I may alſo anſwer for my colleagues) ſo many anxious days and ſleepleſs nights. It is eaſy for any bungler to pull down the faireſt fabrick, but is that a reaſon, my Lords, he ſhould cenſure the ſkill of the architect who reared it. But I fear I treſpaſs, my Lords, on your patience too long. The ſubject was near my heart, and you will pardon me, if I have been earneſt in laying before your Lordſhips our embarraſſments, our difficulties, our views, and our reaſons for what we have done. I ſubmit them to you with confidence, and rely on the nobleneſs of your natures, that in judging of men who have hazarded ſo much for their country, you will not be guided by prejudice, nor influenced by party.

F I N I S.